

**Q1. Describe the project or program being nominated. Including the timing of the project (when it began, when it finished, and, in the case of multiple phase project, when major phases were completed and functioning.**

Fresnostartup.com was created as a central resource for obtaining general information to start a business in Fresno. It is meant to help new/young startup businesses or anyone thinking about starting a business to formulate a thought process before embarking into the venture.

The FresnoStartUp Guide, a consolidated booklet of startup resources available from participating agencies can be found on the website, [www.FresnoStartUp.com](http://www.FresnoStartUp.com) and also link to our department's website [www.fresnoez.com](http://www.fresnoez.com). In English and Spanish, it provides a checklist that helps businesses through the process of registering their business and getting their business started. It also identifies other programs that may be useful to businesses as they continue to operate their business.

An important feature of this Guide is to enable user access to phone numbers for key agency contacts, internet links to appropriate forms, and information about requirements for doing business in Fresno.

We first created The FresnoStartUp Guide in October 2005 and completed it in January 2006. We then proceeded to secure the [www.FresnoStartUp.com](http://www.FresnoStartUp.com) in late January 2006. The Website and the StartUp Guide were officially launched on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006. (See attached article in Fresno Bee).

**Q2. What significant impact has the project or program had on employment, expansion of the local tax base, and diversification of the area's economy?**

This program is a resource to individuals thinking about starting a business, and it is highly dependent on internet access. Due to the nature of start up businesses, it may take months or years to come to fruition. Therefore, it is difficult for us to measure at this time the significant impact on employment, expansion of the local tax base, and diversification of the area's economy the program brings. Nevertheless, it is a known fact that once these startup businesses grow and expand; it will definitely contribute positively to the local tax base, increase employment and create diversification of the area's economy. At this moment, we do at least know that 429 hits per month are taking place at this website through our tracking system. We are working on adding a "user tracking system" on the website itself, and will then be able to track job creation and tax base revenue in the future.

**Q3. How has the project demonstrated innovation and/or creativity and what aspect of this project could be replicated in other communities?**

The Fresno Startup program was created with full collaboration from our community partners and agencies. (There are 47 agencies and partners to be exact.) A full list of participants can be obtained on the last page of The FresnoStartUp Guide. This demonstrates cooperation, cohesiveness and understanding from participating agencies regarding the needs of small businesses and startups.

As a new startup/entrepreneur, there is so much information to gather and it can be mind boggling for someone who is new to the area or someone who is new to starting a business. These are things they don't teach you in business school. They don't teach you where to obtain a business license or what kind of licenses you need. Although agencies like the IRS, SBA, etc. have their own niches in the services they provide to businesses, it is not easily understood for someone who is new to starting their own business.

With the Fresno Startup Guide, it provides an easy 10 steps checklist on what they should know about starting their own company. This will help shorten the amount of time needed to search for relevant information and eliminate some of the frustration.

Besides being able to help the startup/entrepreneur, this program is also a big help to commercial business partners such as the bank. The Fresno Startup Guide is easily downloadable and is being used by banks in Fresno, the chambers of commerce, Workforce Investment Board, local incubator center, and many other agencies. Especially for the banks, this program helps them better identify who their true potential customers are, and which are more likely to secure a business loan by first having the customers read through the Startup Guide and fully understand what they have to go through to start their businesses.

This program had never been done by the City of Fresno nor the surrounding region. It is highly adaptable for use by our currently partners (who actually help us market this program) as well as any other city that may choose to copy it with slight modification for local regulation differences.

#### **Q4. What are the project or program's noteworthy contribution to the field of economic development?**

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of all economy and it is essential for the economic development of every community. Through entrepreneurship, new ideas and inventions are developed and this enables continual improvements of societies and their organizations.

Contrary to what most people think, wealth and a high majority of jobs are typically created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals, many of whom go on to create big businesses. People who are exposed to entrepreneurship often express the following: they have more opportunity to exercise creative freedoms, higher self esteem, and an overall greater sense of control over their own lives. As a result, many experienced business people, political leaders, economists, and educators believe that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national, and global scale. It is with this in mind that FresnoStartUp.com was developed: to prepare youth and adults to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy by providing them with relevant information in a quick and easy manner to help them get started on the right foot.

#### **Q5. Describe the program or project's achievement in obtaining its stated objectives, as well as its cost effectiveness.**

The objective of this program is to encourage entrepreneurship by providing them with relevant "one-stop" information. At the same time, due to the small number of staff in the

City of Fresno's Economic Development Department, we want to better utilized staff's time while providing quality information to entrepreneurs.

Not only did we obtain our stated objectives by a huge cost savings to our department's budget, (please see **Analysis of Cost Saving** stated below), the FresnoStartup program also benefited the community partners by helping them utilize their staff time as well. This in turn contributes to cost savings for all the agencies and partners who uses this program and the guide book.

Such examples include the Central Valley Business Incubator, who uses the Startup Guide Book as teaching materials for their introductory course to starting a business, and the Board of Director from SCORE who find this guide book very useful and beneficial during their counseling session with entrepreneurs.

### **Analysis of cost saving are as follows:**

#### **1. Usage**

- **5143 hits** for the entire year ending January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

#### **2. Staff Cost**

- 18,755 = hours per staff/per year
- \$101.67 = per hour/per staff person

For a staff to manage phone calls and answer questions regarding startup businesses requires an average of 13 minutes per phone call. Utilizing the rates above, this would cost the Department \$21.97 for the 13 minutes.

Estimating that each one of these home page hits would need to be handled by an employee, the cost of 5143 hits equals **\$112,991.71** ( $5143 \times \$21.97 = \$112,991.71$ ) for the entire year.

#### **3. Website cost**

- **\$17.60** = Cost of website per year
- **\$8.47** = Staff time for website maintenance for the year  
( web designer uses only 5 minutes to modify changes)
- Total website cost = **\$26.07** ( $\$17.60 + \$8.47 = \$26.07$ )

#### **4. Total Savings = \$112,965.64** ( $\$112,991.71 - \$26.07$ )